

Tzu Chi Provides Goods, Medical Care to Indonesian Earthquake Victims

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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On August 8, Indonesian volunteers of the Tzu Chi Foundation provided 13 tonnes of relief goods and medical care to victims of two severe earthquakes in Lombok Island.

The two earthquakes struck Lombok within the last month, with one on August 5 registering 6.9 on the Richter scale. It set off a tsunami warning and forced about 20,000 people to leave their homes and take shelter. Within two days, the Indonesian branch of Tzu Chi prepared 13 tonnes of rice, clothing, medicines and beds. It assembled a team of 32 volunteers who took an Indonesian military plane to the affected area. On the morning of August 8, they started their survey work and then distributed the goods and held a medical clinic.

On July 9, Lombok was hit by an earthquake measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale. It caused deaths and injuries and the collapse of houses. Volunteers from the Foundation later went to the affected areas and distributed goods to the victims who were living in tents. They visited the injured in hospital and provided care and condolences. After understanding the needs of the victims, they continued to provide the aid they needed. For their part, the victims were very appreciative of the volunteers providing the aid so quickly. The residents on the island are mainly Muslim, and Tzu Chi is a Buddhist organization. Despite this religious difference, the wounded were full of gratitude and called on Allah to bless the volunteers.



A week later, on August 5, came the 6.9 earthquake on August 5. Most of the local homes were made of grass and brick tiles and could not withstand the quake. Several thousand homes collapsed; more than 20,000 people were forced to seek shelter outside. On hearing the news, the Indonesian volunteers of the Foundation started preparing the goods and the relief operation.

The volunteers prepared five tonnes of rice, two hundred boxes of noodles, 1,000 cotton quilts and clothes. They also prepared tents, electricity generators, medicines and beds for the sick. Because they have been carrying out charity and medical operations in Indonesia for a long time, their efficiency is well recognized. Several years ago, they signed a memorandum of understanding with the Indonesian military and so were able to use a military aircraft to deliver the relief goods to Lombok.

The team gathered on the afternoon of August 7 – including the volunteers from Indonesia and members of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA). With the relief goods, they boarded the military aircraft for the flight to Pamenang in the north of Lombok, the area affected by the earthquake. They stayed the night at Jaya wijaya in Tanjung Pamenang village. On the morning of August 8, they did a survey, distributed the goods and carried out the medical clinic.

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Many local people saw the volunteers and realized that they had taken the initiative to come to help.



The nine doctors of TIMA held a “moving clinic”, examining those who had been injured and dressing their wounds. They also comforted them. In Tempos village, they treated more than 200 people.

One of the patients was Rutianing, 80, who told the doctor that she had pain all over his body. Her son, Purniadi, said that their home had collapsed because of the earthquake and that his mother had suffered injuries to the head and the left arm; both required eight to nine stitches. TIMA Dr Dharma examined the wound of Rutianing, changed the dressing and then provided medicines to stop the pain and the inflammation.

After the quake, there were several aftershocks, which left Rutianing terrified. Dr Dharma consoled her and hoped to reduce her fear, so that she became calm again. For her part, Rutianing was moved and held the hand of the doctor. She thanked all the volunteers for coming to help.

The Tzu Chi Foundation will continue to understand the local needs, deliver relief aid and later continue to provide humanitarian help according to the actual situation on the ground.